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in

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Volume 1

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Robert A. W. Lowndes, Editor

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Always the same, that dream—with the mad woman's dagger nearing my throat. Yet I loved her!

My Lady of the Tunnel

by Arthur J. Burks

THERE IS NOTHING obscure or even particularly strange about it. I know exactly at what period of my life the grim dream started. As for its aftermath, the end of it, I am convinced that another hand will set it down, for I shall not be alive to do so. And I feel that the end will come here in this house under the elms, gloomy and forbidding, on Long Island.

It is a far cry from Long Island to the Western homestead where the dream began, and necessitates a sort of recapitulation. But for me that is easy, because every phase of it is written on the retina of my memory as though in letters of fire. Listen, then.

It began with a story. I was, I should say, about thirteen years of age. I was studious. I read everything I could find that was readable.

However, in a Western homestead, operated by my mother, who labored like a strong man from dawn to dusk and never had any money for purchase of anything save the barest necessities, reading matter was limited.

We had subscribed to one metropolitan newspaper—on which our subscription was always very much in arrears—and it was in this paper that I found the serial called “My Lady of the Tunnel.” To-day that story perhaps would not be run in any magazine or newspaper in the land, but I’m referring now to a serial which ran twenty years ago. Those twenty years, during which I have lived more than the average man does in two lifetimes, seem to have passed in a flash. But when I sit down and review them, which I can’t help doing at intervals—for I *must* to keep from going insane—the time seems to have been ages ago.

Perhaps you read that story? It was written by a man called Herman Panzer. I recall very little of the actual story, save that it had something to do with the Civil War, of spies and counterspies—all the unholy stuff of death and destruction, of heartache and heartbreak—and of horror.

It seems there was an aged house—I’m referring to that story now—which was connected with another house almost a mile away by a tunnel. There came a time in the shifting fortunes of war when the rebels held one of the houses, the Federals the other—and often the enemies tried to trick each other by way of the tunnel. Whether they ever succeeded or not is immaterial. What *is* material is that many lives were lost in these attempts, and not one of them in either cause.

Those who died were murdered, struck down in the dark, and when

found, each one had a knife thrust to the hilt in his throat.

According to the story, the tunnel was inhabited by a mad woman dressed in white. Perhaps she could see in the dark. I don’t know. It was quite safe for any one to traverse the tunnel if that one carried a lantern. But if one stepped into the darkness, there always followed a shriek, a moan, and the careless one was found supine on the tunnel floor, a dagger driven to the hilt in his throat, and on his face a look of abysmal horror.

Nobody was ever stabbed with anything but a dagger. Not a poniard, a stiletto, or anything except a dagger. The mere word has, ever since, been good for a shudder when I see it in print or hear it spoken.

That story, because I was an imaginative boy, frightened me half to death, and to-day thought of it still does.

Our shack on the homestead had one huge room. It had two beds, one of which folded up against the wall. My mother slept in the big bed, my brother and I in the folding bed—and I was always forgetting things. You see, I was now old enough to do a few things around the homestead, but I was scatter-brained, and in the end my imagination and my scatter-brainedness will be my undoing.

We would be in bed, perhaps my brother and I asleep. The light would be out, and the room filled with darkness. Our shack was lonely, our nearest neighbor being several miles away. We had a barn at some little distance, say seventy-five yards, from the house. We had two horses and a milk cow, a turkey gobbler and a couple of turkey hens, and a small flock of chickens.

“George,” my mother would say suddenly out of the darkness, “I’ll

bet you forgot to separate the cow and calf before you went to bed! If you leave them together, there won't be any milk in the morning. Go and see, now!"

"Aw, mother," I would say, "I didn't forget!"

"You've got the quilts over your head again," my mother would reply sharply. "Some of these days you'll smother. What makes you cover up like that? Your brother Charlie doesn't."

How could I tell her that my brother Charlie, who had no imagination, was not interested in reading, and wouldn't even listen to me when I tried to tell him the story of "My Lady of the Tunnel"? How could mother understand that I kept the quilts up around my throat to keep the lady of the tunnel from stabbing me in the throat with a dagger? One couldn't say such things to my mother. One would have been spanked, big as one was. Mother was a hard-headed, practical person.

And there was a phrase in the story which always gave me the shivers. It seemed that on occasion the tunnel woman appeared to prospective victims. A man would be shaving, for example. A door behind him would open slowly. In his mirror he would watch it, and shiver a little, perhaps, but hold quite still, razor poised. Then, a bit at a time, "the haggard, ghostly lineaments of the mad woman" would appear through the door. Always she would be crawling on her hands and knees, would be dressed in immaculate white, and her fair hand would grip the handle of a dagger—always a dagger. Later I wondered where she got all her daggers, as she invariably left the weapon in the wound in the throat of her victim. But I couldn't argue

myself out of my fears by ridiculing such obvious details.

"I'm sure I separated the cow and calf," I insisted to mother.

"Get up and go see if you did!"

What a horror that was! I would rise, and quickly, too, since mother meant it when she gave orders, to slip into my overalls and go out to the dark barn. I would try to slip on my overalls with one hand, while with the other I would hold my pillow over my throat to keep back the dagger of the woman of the tunnel! Then, when I had dressed, and reached the door, and flung it open to let the moonlight in, I would find myself bathed in cold sweat. And I took the pillow to the barn with me!

Once out in the open, I would run. I would try to keep my eyes from wandering across the moonlit homestead, which was not all cultivated, and was heavily wooded with sagebrush and greasewood, because I knew from past experience what I would see among the shadows: a wraithlike figure, a slender woman, dressed all in white, moving like a cloud of smoke or fog among the brushwood! I knew she wasn't there, yet always I saw her.

At the barn, invariably I would find that I *had* failed to separate the cow and calf. And while I did it, moving fearfully in the darkness of the barn, I held my pillow over my throat with one hand.

Then I would run back to the house as fast as I could, afraid to look back for fear of seeing "the haggard, ghostly lineaments of the mad woman," in full pursuit, dagger grasped in uplifted hand.

I would slam the door and literally hurl myself into bed, covering my head immediately with the quilts.

But I read "My Lady of the Tun-

nel" through to the bitter end. Now I know that the story really had no end, because I was a part of it, and it can end only when I am dead.

That horror of getting up in the dark has stayed with me almost to this day, though of course I no longer guard my throat with a pillow; but I do get cold sweats when I move in the dark and strain my eyes for a sight of the "haggard, ghostly lineaments of the mad woman."

I DON'T KNOW where the dream began. That part is hazy, and is made more so because I was never exactly able to tell where reality ended and the dream began. At first, after finishing "My Lady," I was only afraid of the dark, so analogous, I fancied, with the tunnel in the story. And the older I became, the worse became my obsession. Reason told me that it was all just a story, and that nothing would ever happen to me. I'd probably die of something else, though my mother often told me that I was born to be hanged.

The cold sweats, the stark, almost gibbering fear of the dark, finally brought on the inevitable. I would go to sleep with the covers over my throat. I always did that, and inevitably the tunnel woman followed me into my dreams. Out of it all I've come to this conclusion: that we have nothing to say about our own destiny. I am just as sure that my whole life was laid out for me at birth, and that I can change not one iota of it, as I am that my mother was the greatest woman on the face of the earth, or above, or under it. And may she outlive me!

So I started dreaming, and my dream was invariably the same:

I would "waken," in the dream, in the tunnel of the story. I never

knew quite where it was, and it didn't matter. I would waken in the midst of Panzer's story. I would be just starting through the tunnel, holding the lantern high before me with one hand, while with the other I would hold a thick pillow against my throat. I knew that the mad woman wouldn't attack so long as I held the lighted lantern. But no matter how carefully my lantern was lighted, or how well the wick was trimmed, or how filled the lantern was with oil, there was always the chance that a cold breeze in the tunnel would extinguish the light—and then the mad woman would strike.

In my dream I would always encounter the mad woman in the tunnel. She would always have the dagger in her hand. But to me her face was neither haggard nor ghostly. You see, the horror of my dream was this: even as a child, when the dreams first began, I loved the mad woman!

As a child, I loved her as I loved my first school-teacher, with a child's adoration. But I loved life, too. The mad woman, whom I called "Sybil," because she was called that in "My Lady of the Tunnel," had a beautiful smile, and her eyes told me that she loved me, too. But I couldn't escape the fact that she was mad, and that she killed people.

So, though I loved her as a child loves a grown woman, and she loved me as a grown woman loves all children, she always attacked me with the dagger just as my light went out. And my lantern always went out at exactly the same place in the dream—and always I would be fighting with all my childish strength against the mad woman. Now that I could no longer see her beautiful face, because of darkness,

I thought of it as "haggard and ghostly." I would protect my throat with the pillow, while with my free hand I would seek to keep Sybil from slaying me. I loved her, so I refused to hurt her. I merely tried to disarm her. I spoke to her of my love, even as I fought for my life; but never, at any time, then or in later years, did she answer me.

As we fought, I would smell a heady perfume in my nostrils, sweet, overpowering. My hand would touch her skin, soft and delightful to the touch as the down on young peaches. Her breath would fan my cheeks. Her body would press against me. I would try to locate the knife in the dark. I would sense it darting to my throat. I would grasp the wrist of the knife hand; but always she would be stronger than I, strong with the strength of madness—and she would force my hand down as the knife moved inexorably to my throat.

It would touch the pillow I held, and continue on into the feathers with which the pillow was stuffed. Closer and closer it would come to my throat. And then, when the point touched my throat, I would waken in reality to find my pillow against my throat, my body bathed in sweat, and tired as though I had fought a real fight—and often as not my mother would be standing at the bedside in her white nightgown, shaking me.

"Wake up! Wake up!" she would be saying in exasperation. "You're having such a loud nightmare nobody can sleep!"

It would take me a minute to discover that mother wasn't Sybil, for the resemblance, especially to eyes just opened from sleep, was terrifying.

I knew I would never marry, never love, any one but Sybil. And

since I knew that there was no Sybil really, I knew I would never marry or love any woman. Of course, I was a child who couldn't see into the future—fortunately. If people could see into the future, the world would go mad.

I guess I was a strange lad. I know I read everything, and my selections always aroused the ire of my elders. I read everything weird, occult, and strange that I could find. I read history, poetry, the world's finest prose. I read Horatio Alger and Oliver Optic. Yes, I read. I couldn't master the multiplication table, but knew whole chapters of the Bible by heart. I could quote verses, many verses, from "Paradise Lost," from "Il Penseroso," "The Ancient Mariner"—any verse I read and liked, and I read all and liked all.

But the Alger books dealt with New York.

One day I told my mother:

"Some day I'm going to New York."

"You'll be a farmer," my mother said. "You'll never see New York."

Later I read something about Long Island, and became more specific.

"I shall live in an old sedate house on Long Island," I told my mother.

"I don't know where Long Island is," replied mother, "but if it's more than ten miles from this homestead you'll never even see it."

I put this in here to show that even then destiny was shaping itself in me. I *knew* I was going to Long Island, New York, some day. There was no hurry about it, but I knew I could not escape it any more than I could escape death—or loving Sybil.

And I knew, even then, that I didn't really wish to go to Long

Island. Deep down inside me, as a matter of fact, something warned me that I must *never* live in "an old sedate" house on Long Island; at the same time I knew in my very soul that I could not escape going and living in the nebulous house of my fancy. Then it was all very hazy. Now I know that it was all worked out beforehand, and that I couldn't have escaped.

I imagine my wanderings, before I finally came to live in this house where this is being written, were in the nature of attempts to escape my destiny, whatever it may prove to be. Concerning that I know nothing, save that the end of this story must *inevitably* be written by another hand than mine.

I feel that, believe it, but cannot tell you why.

The dream of Sybil came to me during all my childhood and youth. When I joined the Marine Corps during the War, I often felt much ashamed of myself because, when I had to crawl out of my bunk to take over my tour of sentry duty, I always either covered my throat with my upflung arm or with a pillow. I was caught at it innumerable times. But I didn't tell my buddies of my nightmares, and their constant gibing, instead of breaking me of my fears, made them worse. The dream came almost every night. And there were times when I had a particularly gloomy post to walk, when I could see Sybil, ethereal as creeping mist, among the shadows, especially on what my buddies called the "graveyard watch." I imagine the very words brought forth the fancy, for my imagination had certainly become no less.

The War meant little to me, so I pass it over. Too much has already been written about it. But Sybil

was my ever constant companion throughout all that time. I fought with her at night, when I dreamed, and my buddies laughed at me because I cried out the name of "Sybil" in my sleep. They wouldn't have understood if I had told them, or perhaps they would have. I often saw Sybil in the smoke of battle, and she was part of the smoke, so that none but I might see her. I guess I was a fair sort of soldier—and I wasn't especially unusual, for my buddies liked me in spite of constant chaffing about Sybil and my nightmares, which sometimes wakened the whole barracks because I shouted.

I was commissioned. I rose from the ranks. I say this not to boast, but to show that I must have been a normal man, and certainly a bit beyond the average in mentality.

I was ordered to the West Indies—and I lost Sybil! My dreams ended abruptly, and I had peace. That lasted for a year or so. I forgot to cover my throat when I walked in the dark. I still loved Sybil, but I was becoming more normal in my own eyes. I was growing up. I might even marry, though, of course, my wife must resemble the Sybil of my dreams. That was important. You see, the reason why I fought so carefully with Sybil in my dreams was that I was fighting not against her, but for her. I wanted to save her from madness, for myself. In my dream I knew I dreamed; but I also knew that my dreams were as real as reality. I can't explain that. You'll have to accept it, at least, until you've listened to the rest which follows.

Then Sybil came back to me in a strange way.

I WAS SERVING in the intelligence department, and my reports

went directly to the State department in Washington. The place: Santo Domingo City. A multiple murderer had escaped from Nigua Prison. One of my men tried to capture him and was badly wounded by a machete. The commanding general, when I reported the facts to him, said tersely, in a way that commanding generals have:

"Get him!"

The murderer's name was an odd one: "John of the Rose." He was a giant Negro. He had a sense of humor, and his spy system was the greatest I have ever encountered. Within half an hour after I had been ordered to bring him in, I found a note in the pocket of my khaki blouse. How it arrived there I never knew, but it was from John of the Rose, and it was a jeering challenge. He knew I'd been ordered to get him, and told me I would never succeed. He would, he said, play with me, cat-and-mouse fashion, for a couple of months, before he sent me, with a dagger in my throat, to join the others he had murdered.

A dagger in my throat.

As usual, the word "dagger" made me shiver; but any thought of Sybil and John of the Rose at the same time never occurred to me. One was black, one white. One was very real, the other a figment of Herman Panzer's imagination.

John of the Rose made a fool of me for over a month. He sent me a note every day, and I never learned how he did it. Then came the note which brought Sybil back to me. It ran like this:

"I'm tired of being a fugitive. I'll be at the house of the leper in Agua Dulce at midnight to-night. Come for me alone and I'll be there, waiting. Bring any one else and you accomplish nothing. You can ar-

rest me, provided you are physically able. Come armed as you like, as I shall be. The winner either takes John of the Rose to prison—or he commits another murder. John of the Rose."

This has nothing to do with the chronicle, save as it had to do with the return of Sybil. I decided to accept the challenge of John of the Rose. I thrust a couple of automatics into my belt and went out to get the murderer, leaving Santo Domingo City about eleven o'clock at night. Agua Dulce is north of Santo Domingo City, roughly in the area lying between the city and the junction of a smaller river with the Ozama River. This section is almost impenetrable jungle. But I knew every foot of it, because I had made a military map of it.

I started off.

The obvious way to go to the leper's house, which was almost in the center of the area, was to pass through Villa Francesca and take the regular trail that crossed Agua Dulce. But John would expect me by that way. So I went instead through the Gate of San Diego—named to honor the son of Christopher Columbus, whose ruined palaces remain to the left of the gate as you exit—to the Ozama River. There I purloined a *yola*, a small skiff, belonging to some unknown native fisherman. With this I rowed upriver almost to the spot where the smaller river flows into the Ozama.

There I went ashore, set the boat adrift, knowing it would be picked up where the outgoing waters of the Ozama and the incoming waters of the Caribbean meet, next morning, and restored to its owner. Then I felt about until I found a trail leading into the jungle toward the leper's house—so called because a

man had died in it of that disease. I went boldly into the trail. It was midnight. The trees met above the trail, absolutely shutting out the moonlight. It was so dark that I could see nothing, and I followed the aged trail by feeling for it with my feet. I couldn't see my hand against my eyes. Once in a while a firefly sped through the jungle, his light so large, seemingly, that I stopped and listened for the motor, imagining a charging automobile. But I couldn't even hear the honking motor horns in Santo Domingo City, only two miles away, but apparently two hundred. This was as much jungle, and as many things could happen here, as in the heart of the Cordillera Centrales. It was the forest primeval.

I got well into the trail before I remembered something. Two years before, an intelligence officer had accepted a challenge such as John of the Rose had sent me. They found his headless body beside a tree several days later. He had been decapitated by a machete. His head was never found.

I went cold. John of the Rose was already a multiple murderer. He wouldn't hesitate to kill me. Already he might be close enough to touch me. He was a native—and once a native had followed me for an hour through the jungle, and I'd never have known he was there if I hadn't stopped so suddenly he bumped into me with startled apologies—almost, incidentally, making me swallow my tongue with fear.

However, I had to go through. But now and again I could see the white trunks of ceiba trees. I knew them, but they looked like human figures dressed in white. They were big enough for any one even so huge as John to hide behind. I might pass one. A man, John, might step

out and decapitate me with a single slash of his machete.

So, without realizing what I did, I lifted my forearm to cover my throat. At first I didn't get the significance of this. I was almost to the clearing before I recalled that I had done this many nights in my life. And instead of fearing John of the Rose when realization came, I feared Sybil.

For here was no dream tunnel, but a real one—and death stalked through it for some one. I felt the hair at the back of my neck stir with my gruesome thoughts. I felt cold finger tips along my spine. Whichever way I turned, I sensed some one behind me to take my life. The woods, reason told me, were deserted, and John of the Rose was probably many miles distant—but something inside me made a fool of reason.

Ever and anon I stopped to listen, and always I stood well away from trees, with my forearm across throat. But already I confused John of the Rose with Sybil, and it was Sybil whom I feared. I heard no sounds at all. John of the Rose, if he was close, would make none, naturally. And Sybil could not. And both were here, at least in my imagination.

I plodded on.

I came to the clearing in which the house of the leper was situated. The woods were behind me, and in my fancy scores of hands reached for me. I was in a cold sweat, as badly frightened as I had been after reading the most lurid installment of "My Lady of the Tunnel."

I—well, it scarcely matters that I caught my automatics in my hands and hurled myself across the clearing at the door of that hut. I smashed through, to find the hut empty. I circled the shack, to find

not a living soul, nothing that lived save the darting fireflies and the mosquitoes which made merry on my skin.

I returned to Santo Domingo City by the regular trail. That's not important, either.

Nor is it important that next morning I had a jeering note from John of the Rose. He told me correctly every step that I had taken the night before, who owned the *yola* I had taken, where I had set it adrift—everything. He told me how many times and where I had stopped along that trail—and he laughed at me for covering my throat with my forearm!

I was sure, that night, that I was alone in the jungle, yet how did John of the Rose know all these things?

But that isn't important, either. For that same night, after I fell asleep in my own cot, Sybil came back to me. Again we fought in the tunnel—the same dream in all its details. Yet, crazy as it may sound, it was like a reunion of lovers. Her face mirrored happiness that we were together again even in the nightmare. It was ghastly—and when I finally awakened, I knew I would never in life be free of Sybil.

Things were being said about me in service circles within a few days. I yelled in my sleep, brother officers said. My superiors decided that the tropics were getting my nerves. I couldn't tell them the truth, or they'd have thought me stranger still. I was worried myself, for not a night passed now that I didn't dream of Sybil.

But there was now one change in the dream. Sybil kissed me—a kiss of ineffable sweetness—before she pressed the point of the dagger against my throat!

WELL, I WAS ordered home, in spite of the fact that I wanted to stay in Santo Domingo. I wanted all the knowledge of the island I could gather, for I had begun writing, and wished to write, of the land I had learned, in spite of John of the Rose and his ilk, to love. Angered at the obstinacy of my superiors, I resigned from the service, sure that I could earn my living with my pen, and sailed for the States.

I was assigned to Brooklyn Navy Yard pending acceptance of my resignation.

It came through in due course. It was not until I was installed in quarters in New York, a civilian, that I recalled my boyhood ambition to live in the great metropolis. This made me recall my youthful fancies about an old house on Long Island. Inside me sounded the old voice of warning.

"You are in New York," it said. "Be satisfied with that. Don't putter around Long Island."

It was nothing you could put your finger on, understand. Just an inner warning. In the past, when I had had inner warnings, I had got into trouble for not heeding them. But that I did never kept me from going against fate when the inner warnings came again. It didn't this time.

I would visit Long Island. I could not resist the urge.

But to what part should I go? I hadn't the slightest idea.

I decided, after finishing a couple of short stories and waiting for editors to report on them, to visit Long Island. Long Island is large. There were countless places I could go. How should I decide?

"I'll go to Pennsylvania Station," I decided after a while, "and go to the first place whose name I see on

a ticket as I peer through the window of the ticket office."

I had no sooner come to this decision than that inner voice came even stronger than before.

"Don't go! Don't go!" it said, almost aloud.

But I was stubborn.

I went to the station, and ended by buying a ticket for East Northport. I had no sooner done so than I had the queerest fancy, which only went to prove what I had always, at least subconsciously, believed: that nothing we do is of our own free will, that we go entirely through life, guided! By whom or by what, I don't know. Neither does any one else.

But I couldn't have turned back, after buying that ticket, and exchanged it for another one had my life depended upon it. And my life *did* depend upon it. I was like a man following out a post-hypnotic suggestion. I had no will of my own. I merely bought the ticket and allowed myself to drift. That is all there was to it.

I caught my train, a little surprised to find myself on the right one. I changed at Jamaica without being told. I landed in East Northport. I hadn't the least hesitation. I even hurried a little, as though to get it over with.

Get *what* over with? The inevitable!

I caught a suburban taxi.

"Drive me to Northport," I said.

The driver didn't ask questions. He merely slammed the door and started off. We entered Northport.

"Turn to the right there," I next commanded him.

"If you'll tell me who you wanta visit," he said, "I can take you there by the shortest route."

"I don't know," I said. "Just drive."

He made the turn.

Far down the street, high on the side of the hill, I saw the house. It was just as I had imagined it. It was old and sedate. The blinds looked like sightless eyes. Yes, I knew it well.

"I'll get out here, at this house," I told the driver.

He jerked his head back, startled, to stare at me.

"You don't really mean *here*?" he said.

"But I do. Why shouldn't I?"

"Well, I guess it ain't none of my business, but—well, folks don't ever stop here. You see, the house is——"

"What's wrong with it?"

"Nothin'. It's the old man that lives in it. His name's Caleb Farhm, an' he's——"

The driver touched his forehead. I shivered a little, but I knew how small-town people often regarded perfectly brilliant men as being "a little off." I'd see for myself. Farhm was a bachelor. I wanted to stay in his house, if only for one night. It became an obsession with me, even as I talked with the driver. Maybe Farhm would take me in.

If only I had listened!

I HAVE NOW been in the house of Caleb Farhm for three weeks. He welcomed me without surprise, and readily arranged for me to stay with him. He must have been past seventy years of age. He had never married. He looked strange when he told me that. In his old age he was sorry he had no children. I rapidly became the "son" he had never had. And when I told him I was seeking a place in which to write, he was pitifully eager to be of every assistance to me. And he was extremely wealthy, though miserly with himself.

I'll never forget that first night in the old house, though each night thereafter was more stirring than the one preceding. For almost as I crossed the threshold of the old house I knew something that sent my heart racing, filled me with strange fear and excitement: Sybil was nearer to me here than anywhere else in any other period of my life.

I didn't tell old Caleb Farhm about Sybil—but ever since that first night I'm convinced that he knows! Maybe he listened outside my door when I screamed Sybil's name in my nightmare. For the dream came to me the very first night, more real than ever before. And for the first time Sybil spoke to me as we fought in the dream tunnel.

"We are closer together than ever before," she said, while her fair lips moved as though she kissed me with the words. "And now, my dear, you shall in very truth release me."

The fight was the same. The dagger was the same. I wakened when it touched my throat. And Sybil said:

"I try to keep from using the dagger, but my madness prevents me. Fight against me, fight hard, even to the point of slaying me—for if my dagger penetrates your throat, you will die!"

I remembered all this when I wakened to hear Caleb Farhm pounding on my door. His quavering voice came through the panels.

"What ails you, son? What ails you?"

I let old Caleb in. He stared at me as though he thought me bereft of all my senses.

"You've something on your mind, your conscience," he said. "Tell me."

So, while I hadn't told him at first, I now did.

Understand that in this writing I am covering several nights. I confessed my obsession to old Caleb. I told him of the story of "My Lady of the Tunnel." He listened. There was a strange light in his eyes which made me recall the gesture of the taxicab driver when he had dropped me at old Caleb's door. But I hadn't found anything about Caleb to fear. He was eccentric, perhaps, but nothing more. I loved him, in a way, though at times he repelled me. Right now I had the fancy that he hated me with a dreadful hatred, but, of course, it was only fancy.

"I am convinced that, though I love this dream woman, I must relieve myself of her incubus or I shall go mad," I told Caleb. "She is awfully real to me, Mr. Farhm."

"How will you rid yourself of her?" He didn't seem surprised, didn't think me strange; and I thought I read fear in his voice, not of me, or for me, but for some other reason—some reason I couldn't even guess at.

"I am always grasping her by the throat with one hand, while she presses the dagger against mine," I explained. "I have never really tried to choke her, because I love her. At least, in my dreams I have always loved her."

"Who is to say where realities and dreams are divided?" asked old Caleb hastily, with an old man's fury, I thought. "Go on! Go on!"

"I've an idea," I said, "that if I can go to sleep with the intention of dreaming and of putting aside my love for Sybil, I can bring myself to choke her to death. If I can, she will die in the dream—and perhaps I shall never dream of her again."

"And suppose, in the dream, she thrusts the dagger into your throat?" he demanded.

That startled me.

"That's odd," I said. "In the dream I just had she spoke of that; said that if she ever really stabbed me, I would die. Well, I'm all right now, Mr. Farhm. You need your rest. Please go back to bed. I won't dream again to-night."

I escorted him to the door, which, this time, I did not lock. Now I sit at my writing desk, trying to anticipate what will happen when I go back to sleep—if I dream the dream again—which I know I will. *I know it.*

Will I be relieved of Sybil forever if I can force myself to choke her life away? If she, in the convulsions of her body while I strangle her, stabs me with the dagger, shall I die?

If I live, after this next dream, I'll write it all down here. If I die, you'll know that Sybil thrust the dagger home. I wonder, if that should be the case, if any marks will be found on my corpse—the sign of her victory?

You see, I am thoroughly sane. I know Sybil isn't real to any one but myself, as she must have been real to Herman Panzer, who created her.

And now I have finished—perhaps only for to-night, perhaps forever. I don't feel emotional about it. Either way I am satisfied, for I have lived a full life.

Good night.

IT GIVES ME a queer thrill to read those parts of George Styne's last story which state that some hand other than his own shall write the story's end. It makes me feel, somehow, like an instrument of his fate. But, then, aren't most lawyers

instruments in the fates of their clients? My own name doesn't matter. But I was counsel for the defense in the case of the State of New York versus Caleb Farhm, charged with the murder of George Styne.

There was no question of Farhm's guilt in my mind. He stabbed Styne to death; stabbed him in the throat with a dagger as Styne slept. That is fact.

I wonder what Styne was dreaming? I wonder if he dreamed that Sybil had the point of her dagger against Styne's throat when old Caleb drove his dagger home?

I guess it's just as well we don't know things like that.

But how can I help wondering, knowing what I know? I know what, it seems, George Styne never knew. Caleb Farhm was interested in Styne because Styne was a writer, but Styne seems never to have asked him why.

And now I'll try to end this story as Styne would have ended it if he had lived.

Twenty-odd years ago, Caleb Farhm created, in a story he wrote, one character whom he loved passionately. It is the story of *Pygmalion* and *Galatea* all over again. For, after a lapse of years, old Caleb's character became very real to him—a sort of dream love. He made the mistake of telling a few people when he first came to Northport, and the fact that those people remembered kept old Caleb from going to the chair, sent him to an asylum instead.

But he did kill George Styne.

He killed him because of overpowering jealousy. For his dream sweetheart had not changed with the years, as old Caleb had. She was still young. So was George Styne.

Caleb Farhm killed Styne for two reasons: because he was jealous, and to keep him from "slaying" Sybil, heroine of "My Lady of the Tunnel," which old Caleb wrote twenty-

odd years ago under the pen name of Herman Panzer.

The lawyer in me believes Caleb Farhm insane. I wish the human being in me *knew*.

Needles

A short while ago a girl of twenty-two began to complain of a pain in her left leg. There seemed to be no cause for it, yet it became increasingly painful and annoying. At first she made light of it, but as days went on and it did not improve, she went to a doctor about it.

X rays showed a small sewing needle lodged in the flesh of the upper leg, very near the skin. It was easily extracted.

Nine years before, the girl had swallowed the needle. There had been no ill effects, and the doctor had advised leaving it alone. In the intervening nine years the needle had worked all the way through to the flesh of the leg.

A dog once had a porcupine needle enter the back of his head and work out through the eye. After a period of months, sight was regained.

THE GLASS FLOOR

By Stephen King

Wharton moved slowly up the wide steps, hat in hand, craning his neck to get a better look at the Victorian monstrosity that his sister had died in. It wasn't a house at all, he reflected, but a mausoleum—a huge, sprawling mausoleum. It seemed to grow out of the top of the hill like an outsized, perverted toadstool, all gambrels and gables and jutting, blank-windowed cupolas. A brass weather-vane surmounted the eighty-degree slant of shake-shingled roof, the tarnished effigy of a leering little boy with one hand shading eyes. Wharton was just as glad he could not see.

Then he was on the porch, and the house as a whole was cut off from him. He twisted the old-fashioned bell, and listened to it echo hollowly through the dim recesses within. There was a rose-tinted fanlight over the door, and Wharton could barely make out the date 1770 chiseled into the glass.

Tomb is right, he thought.

The door suddenly swung open. "Yes, sir?" The housekeeper stared out at him. She was old, hideously old. Her face hung like limp dough on her skull, and the hand on the door above the chain was grotesquely twisted by arthritis.

"I've come to see Anthony Reynard," Wharton said. He fancied he could even smell the sweetish odor of decay emanating from the rumpled silk of the shapeless black dress she wore.

"Mr. Reynard isn't seeing' anyone. He's mournin'."

"He'll see me," Wharton said. "I'm Charles Wharton. Janine's brothers."

"Oh." Her eyes widened a little, and the loose bow of her mouth worked around the empty ridges of her gums. "Just a minute." She disappeared, leaving the door ajar.

Wharton stared into the dim mahogany shadows, making out high-backed easy chairs, horse-hair upholstered divans, tall narrow-shelved bookcases, curlicued, floridly carved wainscoting.

Janine, he thought. Janine, Janine, Janine. How could you live here? How in hell could you stand?

A tall figure materialized suddenly out of the gloom, slope-shouldered, head thrust forward, eyes deeply sunken and downcast.

Anthony Reynard reached out and unhooked the door-chain. "Come in, Mr. Wharton," he said heavily.

Wharton stepped into the vague dimness of the house, looking up curiously at the man who had married his sister. There were rings beneath the hollows of his eyes, blue and bruised-looking. The suit he wore was wrinkled and hung limp on him, as if he had lost a great deal of weight. He looks tired, Wharton thought. Tired and old.

"My sister has already been buried?" Wharton asked.

"Yes." He shut the door slowly, imprisoning Wharton in the decaying gloom of the house. "My deepest sorrow, Mr. Wharton. I loved your sister dearly." He made a vague gesture. "I'm sorry."

He seemed about to add more, then shut his mouth with an abrupt snap. When he spoke again, it was obvious he had bypassed whatever had been on his lips.

"Would you care to sit down? I'm sure you have questions."

"I do.." somehow it came out more curtly than he had intended.

Reynard signed and nodded slowly. He led the way deeper into the living room and gestured at a chair. Wharton sank deeply into it. And it seemed to gobble him up rather than give beneath him. Reynard sat next to the fireplace and dug for cigarettes. He offered them wordlessly to Wharton, and he shook his head.

He waited until Reynard lit his cigarette, then asked, "Just how did she die? Your letter didn't say much."

Reynard blew out the match and threw it into the fireplace. It landed on one of the eboy iron fire-dogs, a carved gargoyle that stared at Wharton with toad's eyes.

"She fell," he said. "She was dusting in one of the other rooms, up along the eaves. We were planning to paint, and she said it would have to be well-dusted before we could begin. She had the ladder. It slipped. Her neck was broken." There was a clicking sound in his throat as he swallowed.

"She died instantly?"

"Yes." He lowered his head and placed a hand against his brow. "I was heartbroken."

The gargoyle leered at him, squat torso and flattened, sooty head. Its mouth was twisted upward in a weird, gleeful grin, and its eyes seemed turned inward at some private joke. Wharton looked away from it with an effort. "I want to see where it happened."

Reynard stubbed out his cigarette half-smoked. "You can't."

"I'm afraid I must," Wharton said coldly. "After all, she was my..."

"It's not that," Reynard said. "The room has been partitioned off. That should have been done a long time ago."

"If it's just a matter of prying a few boards off a door..."

"You don't understand. The room has been plastered off completely. There's nothing but a wall there."

Wharton felt his gaze being pulled inexorably back to the fire-dog. Damn the thing, what did it have to grin about?

"I can't help it. I want to see the room." Reynard stood suddenly, towering over him. "Impossible."

Wharton also stood. "I'm beginning to wonder if you don't have something to hide in there," he said quietly.

"Just what are you implying?" Wharton shook his head a little dazedly.

What was he implying? That perhaps Anthony Reynard had murdered his sister in this Revolutionary War vintage crypt? That there might be something more sinister here than shadowy corners and hideous iron fire-dogs?

"I don't know what I'm implying," he said slowly, "except that Janine was shoved under in a hell of a hurry, and that you're acting damn strange now."

For a moment the anger blazed brighter, and then it died away, leaving only hopelessness and dumb sorrow. "Leave me alone," he mumbled. "Please leave me alone, Mr. Wharton."

"I can't. I've got to know..."

The aged housekeeper appeared, her face thrusting from the shadowy cavern of the hall. "Supper's ready, Mr. Reynard."

"Thank you, Louise, but I'm not hungry. Perhaps Mr. Wharton...?"
Wharton shook his head.

"Very well, then. Perhaps we'll have a bite later."

"As you say, sir." She turned to go.

"Louise?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Come here a moment."

Louise shuffled slowly back into the room, her loose tongue slopping wetly over her lips for a moment and then disappearing. "Sir?"

"Mr. Wharton seems to have some questions about his sister's death. Would you tell him all you know about it?"

"Yes, sir." Her eyes glittered with alacrity. "She was dustin', she was. Dustin' the East Room. Hot on paintin'

it, she was. Mr. Reynard here, I guess he wasn't much interested, because..."

"Just get to the point, Louise," Reynard said impatiently.

"No," Wharton said. "Why wasn't he much interested?"

Louise looked doubtfully from one to the other.

"Go ahead," Reynard said tiredly. "He'll find out in the village if he doesn't up here."

"Yes, sir." Again he saw the glitter, caught the greedy purse of the loose flesh of her mouth as she prepared to impart the precious story. "Mr. Reynard didn't like no one goin' in the East Room. Said it was dangerous."

"Dangerous?"

"The floor," she said. "The floor's glass. It's a mirror. The whole floor's a mirror."

Wharton turned to Reynard, feeling dark blood suffuse his face. "You mean to tell me you let her go up on a ladder in a room with a glass floor?"

"The ladder had rubber grips," Reynard began. "That wasn't why..."

"You damned fool," Wharton whispered. "You damned, bloody fool."

"I tell you that wasn't the reason!"
Reynard shouted suddenly. "I loved your sister! No one is sorrier than I that she is dead! But I warned her! God knows I warned her about that floor!"

Wharton was dimly aware of Louise staring greedily at them, storing up gossip like a squirrel stores up nuts.

"Get her out of here," he said thickly.

"Yes," Reynard said. "Go see to supper."

"Yes, sir." Louise moved reluctantly toward the hall, and the shadows swallowed her.

"Now," Wharton said quietly. "it seems to me that you have some explaining to do, Reynard. This whole thing sounds funny to me. Wasn't there even an inquest?"

"No," Reynard said. He slumped back into his chair suddenly, and he looked blindly into the darkness of the vaulted overhead ceiling. "They know around here about the - East Room."

"And just what is there to know?" Wharton asked tightly.

"The East Room is bad luck," Reynard said. "Some people might even say it's cursed."

"Now listen," Wharton said, his ill temper and unsaid grief building up like steam in a teakettle, "I'm not goin' to be put off. Every word that comes out of your mouth makes me more determined to see that room. Now are you going to agree to it or do I have to go down to that village and ...?"

"Please." Something in the quiet hopelessness of the word made Wharton look up. Reynard looked directly into his eyes for the first time and they were haunted, haggard eyes. "Please, Mr.

Wharton. Take my word that your sister died naturally and go away. I don't want to see you die!" His voice rose to a wail. "I didn't want to see anybody die!"

Wharton felt a quiet chill steal over him. His gaze skipped from the grinning fireplace gargoyle to the dusty, empty eyes bust of Cicero in the corner to the strange wainscoting carvings. And a voice came from within him: Go away from here. A thousand living yet insentient eyes seemed to stare at him from the darkness, and again the voice spoke...

"Go away from here." Only this time it was Reynard.

"Go away from here," he repeated. "Your sister is beyond caring and beyond revenge. I give you my word..."

"Damn your word!" Wharton said harshly. "I'm going down to the sheriff, Reynard. And if the sheriff won't help me, I'll go to the county commissioner. And if the county commissioner won't help me..."

"Very well." The words were like the faraway tolling of a churchyard bell. "Come."

Reynard led the way into the hall, down past the kitchen, the empty dining room with the chandelier catching and reflecting the last light of day, past the pantry, toward the blind plaster of the corridor's end.

This is it, he thought, and suddenly there was a strange crawling in the pit of his stomach.

"I..." he began involuntarily.

"What?" Reynard asked, hope glittering in his eyes.

"Nothing."

They stopped at the end of the hall, Stopped in the twilight bloom. There seemed to be no electric light. On the floor Wharton could see the still-damp plasterer's trowel Reynard had used to Wall up the doorway, and a straggling remnant of Poe's "Black Cat" clanged through his mind: "I had walled the monster up within the tomb..."

Reynard handed the trowel to him blindly. "Do whatever you have to do, Wharton. I won't be party to it. I wash my hands of it."

Wharton watched him move off down The hall with misgivings, his hand opening and closing on the handle of the trowel. The faces of the little-boy weathervane, the fire-dog gargoyle, the wizened housemaid all seemed to mix and mingle before him, all grinning at something he could not understand. Go away from here.

With a sudden bitter curse he attacked the wall, hacking into the soft, new plaster until the trowel scraped across the door of the East Room. He dug away plaster until he could reach the doorknob. He twisted, then yanked on it until the veins stood out in his temples. The plaster cracked, schismed, and finally split, The door swung ponderously open, shedding plaster like a dead skin.

Wharton stared into the shimmering quicksilver pool. It seemed to glow with a light of its own in the darkness, ethereal and fairy-like. Wharton stepped

in, half-expecting to sink into warm pliant flud. But the floor was solid. His own reflection hung suspended below him, attached only be the feet, seeming to stand on its head in thin air. It made him dizzy just to look at it. Slowly his gaze shifted around, the ladder was still there,

Stretching up into the glimmering depths of the mirror. The room was high, he saw. High enough for a fall to – he winced to kill.

It was ringed with empty bookcases. All seeming to lean over him on the very threshold of imbalance. They added to the room's strange, distorting effect.

He went over to the ladder and stared down at the feet. They were rubber-shod, as Reynard had said, and seemed solid enough. But if the ladder had not slid, how had Janine fallen?

Somehow he found himself staring through the floor again. No, he corrected himself. Not through the floor. At the mirror, into the mirror... He wasn't standing on the floor at all, he fancied. He was poised in thin air halfway between the identical ceiling

And floor, held up only by the stupid idea that he was on the floor. That was silly, as anyone could see, for there was the floor, way down there....

"Snap out of it!", he yelled at himself suddenly. He was on the floor, and that was nothing but a harmless reflection of the ceiling. It would only be the floor if I was standing on my head, and I'm not; the other me is the one standing on his head...

He began to feel vertigo, and a sudden lump of nausea rose in his throat. He tried to look away from the fluttering quicksilver depths of the mirror, but he couldn't.

The door...where was the door? He suddenly wanted out very badly. Wharton turned around clumsily, but there were only crazily-tilted bookcases And the jutting ladder and the horrible chasm beneath his feet.

"Reynard!" He screamed. "I'm falling!"

Reynard came running, the sickness Already a gray lesion on his heart. It was done' it had happened again. He stopped at the door's threshold, staring in at the Siamese twins staring at each other in the middle of the two-roofed, no-floored room. "Louise," he croaked around the dry ball of sickness in his throat. "Bring the pole."

Louise came shuffling out of the darkness and handed the hook-ended pole to Reynard. He slid it out across the shining quicksilver pond and caught the body sprawled on the glass. He dragged it slowly toward the door, and when he could reach it, he pulled it out. He stared down into the contorted face and gently shut the staring eyes. "I'll want the plaster," he said quietly. "Yes, sir."

She turned to go, and Reynard stared somberly into the room. Not for the first time he wondered if there was a really a mirror there at all. In the room, a small pool of blood showed on the floor and ceiling, seeming to meet in the center,

blood which hung there quietly and one could wait forever for it to drip.

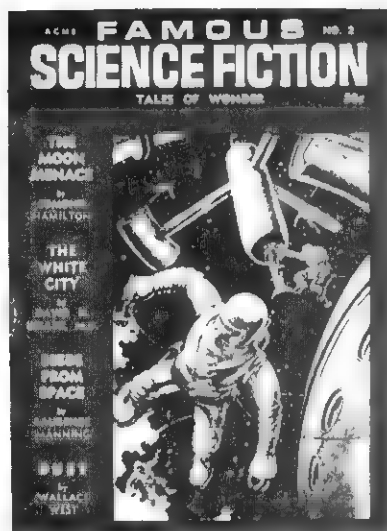
THE END

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The Druid's

by SEABURY QUINN



"TEN thousand little small blue devils! It is annoying. I am vexed, I am harassed, I am exasperated!" Jules de Grandin felt successively in the pockets of his blue-flannel jacket, his oyster-white linen waistcoat and his pin-striped trousers, then turned such a wobegone face to me that I burst out laughing.

"Ha, *sale bête*, you laugh at my distress?" he demanded fiercely. "So. *Parbleu*, you shall pay dearly for your levity. I give you choice of three alternatives: Hand me a cigarette forthwith, convey me instantly where more can be purchased, or die by my hand within the moment. Choose!" He tweaked the tightly waxed ends of his diminutive wheat-blond mustache after the manner of

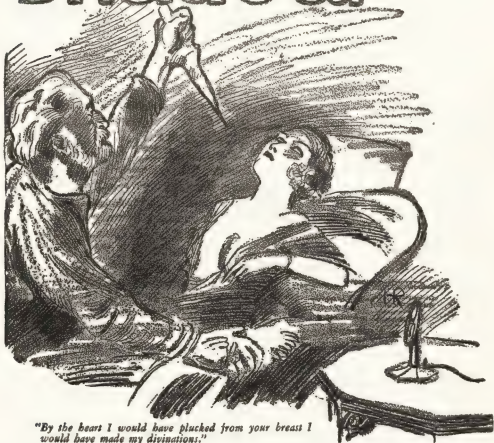
the swashbuckling hero in a costume melodrama.

"I never smoked a cigarette in my life, so my first chance is gone," I grinned, "and I'm too busy to have you kill me this afternoon, so I suppose I'll have to cart you to a cigar store. There's the railway station, shall we get them at the news stand?"

I maneuvered the car across the busy street and parked beside the station entrance. "Wait a minute," I called as he leaped nimbly to the platform, "you've put bad ideas in my head. I think I'll get a cigar here. I don't usually smoke while driving, but——"

"Perfectly," he interrupted with an impish grin, "and you shall buy me a packet of cigarettes when you purchase

Shadow



*"By the heart I would have plucked from your breast I
would have made my divinations."*

your cigar. I impose the penalty for laughing at my misfortune a moment since."

The customary exsurgence which heralded the arrival of a train from the West was beginning as I paused beside the cigar counter. Red Caps moved leisurely toward the landing-platform, a baggage agent opened his book and drew the pencil from his cap band, one or two hotel runners showed signs of returning animation as they rose from the bench where they lounged.

I pocketed my change and turned to light my cigar as the locomotive snorted to a halt and passengers began alighting from the Pullmans, but a cheery hail brought me about as I was in the act of rejoining de Grandin. "Hullo, there, Doctor Trowbridge—imagine running into you at the station—you're a sight for tired eyes! Now it *does* seem like getting home!" Burned to a crisp by the Arizona sun, lean, but by no means emaciated, and showing no trace of the decline which had driven him from our damp

Eastern climate three years before, young Ransome Bartrow shouldered his way through the crowd and took my hand in a bone-crushing grip. "By George, I'm glad to see you again, sir!" he assured me, grinding my knuckles till I was ready to roar with pain.

"And I'm glad to see you, Rance," I answered. "It's hardly necessary to ask how you feel, but——"

"No buts about it," he returned with a laugh. "The doctors looked me over with a microscope—if I'd had anything from dandruff to flat feet they'd have found it—and pronounced me cured. I can live here the rest of my life, and needn't get nervous prostration every time I'm caught in a rain storm, either. Ain't that great?"

"It surely is," I congratulated. "Got your baggage? Come on, then, I want you to meet——"

"Holy smoke, that reminds me!" he burst out. "I want *you* to meet——" He turned, dragging me after him to a modishly dressed young woman who mounted guard above an imposing pile of hand-luggage. "Sylvia, dear," he announced, "this is Doctor Trowbridge. He's had the honor of knowing your lord and master since he was one second old. Doctor Trowbridge, this is my wife."

As I took the girl's hand in mine I was forced to admit Ransome had made an excellent choice, if externals were to be trusted, for she was pretty in an appealing way, with large gray eyes, soft ash-blond hair and a rather sad mouth, and from the look she gave her husband there was no need to ask whether theirs had been a love match.

"And now to meet the stern parent," young Bartrow proclaimed. "I wrote Dad I was bringing him a surprise, but I didn't tell him what it was, and I didn't tell what train I was coming on. Wanted to take him unawares, you know. I—oh,

I say, Doctor Trowbridge, won't you come up to the house with us? Maybe the pater will have a stroke or something when he meets Sylvia, and it's only Christian for us to have a physician along to administer first aid and take his dying statement. Even if he doesn't go into convulsions, it'll be worth your trip to see his face when I say, 'Meet the wife.' What d'ye say?"

My commonplace reply was foreign to my thoughts, for there was more than a possibility the boy's jesting prediction might be realized.

Ransome Bartrow was his father's idol. He was his parents' first and only child, born when both were well past forty, and his advent had led to complications which took his mother's life within a year. His father had married relatively late in life, and with the passing of his adored wife had lavished all the affection of his lonely life upon his son. There was money in abundance, and nothing which could be bought had ever been denied the boy. Copybook maxims to the contrary notwithstanding, young Ransome had developed into a fine young man. He stood well in all his classes at school and excelled in most forms of athletics, rowing stroke on his varsity crew. Entering business with his father after graduation, he showed an aptitude for work which seemed to guarantee success to the newly formed firm of James Bartrow & Son, but before a year had passed the malady which strikes so many former oarsmen fastened on him, and only a hurried trip to Arizona saved his life. From the day his son departed to the West the father had counted the minutes of their separation like a rosary of sorrow, and now when his boy returned only to present a strange young woman who by the law of God and man had first claim on his affections—there might be need for digitalis when the bride was introduced.

JULES DE GRANDIN greeted the youngsters with all the gay enthusiasm he always showed for lovers. Before we had traversed a dozen blocks toward the Bartrow mansion he was sitting with an arm about the shoulders of each, rattling off anecdote after droll anecdote, and Ransome Bartrow's deep, booming laughter mingled with the silvery laugh of his bride as they listened to the witty little Frenchman's sallies.

James Bartrow stood in the broad drawing-room of his big house, straining thoughtfully at the fireless hearth behind its fencing of polished brass fender. He was a big man, well over six feet tall, with a big head crowned with a mane of iron-gray hair and a trimly cut white beard. Something in the bigness and obvious power—physical and mental—of the man seemed to strike his son with awe, and as he tiptoed into the apartment, his bride's hand in his, de Grandin and I at his elbow, his buoyant self-assurance deserted him for the first time.

"Dad?" the appellation was pronounced with questioning diffidence. "Oh, Dad?"

Bartrow wheeled with a nervous jerk, his big, florid face in its frame of white hair lighting up at sound of his son's voice, and took a quick step forward.

"O-o-oh!" the exclamation was soft, scarcely audible, but freighted with sudden panic consternation, and the little bride cringed quickly against her husband's arm. The half-nervous, half-playful smile froze on her lips, leaving her little white teeth partially exposed, as though ready to bite. The merry light in her gray eyes blurred to a set, fixed stare of horror as a convulsive shudder of abhorrence ran through her. It was as though, expecting to meet a friend, she had been suddenly confronted by a gruesome specter—an apparition she had reason to dread and hate.

"Oh, Rance," she pleaded in a voice thick with terror. Oh, Rance—please—" Pounding heart and laboring lungs choked her voice, but the wild, imploring glance she gave her husband pleaded for protection with an eloquence no words could equal.

Startled by the girl's unreasoning fright, I glanced at Bartrow. He had paused almost in the act of stepping; his forward foot rested lightly on the floor, scarcely touching the polished boards, and in his face had come an expression I could not fathom. Astonishment, incredulous delight, something like exultation, shone in his steel-blue eyes, and the smile which came unbidden to his bearded lips was such as a fanatic inquisitor might have worn when some long-sought and particularly virulent heretic came into his power.

The tableau lasted but an instant, and for that fleeting second the sultry September air was charged with an electric thrill of concentrated terror and delight, panic fear and savage exultation of vengeance about to be fulfilled.

Then we were once more normal Twentieth Century people. With words of welcome and genial thumps upon the back and chest James Bartrow greeted his son, and he was the smiling, jovial, new-found father to the bride. But I noticed that the kiss he placed upon her dutifully upturned cheek was the merest perfunctory salutation, and as his lips came near her face the girl's very flesh seemed to cringe from the contact, light as it was.

Bartrow's heavy voice boomed out an order, and a cobweb-festooned bottle in a wicker cradle was brought from the cellar by the butler. The wine was ruby-red and ruby-clear, and Jules de Grandin's small blue eyes sparkled appreciatively as they beheld the black-glass bottle. "Arcachon '89!" he murmured almost piously as he passed the glass under his nostrils,

savoring the wine's aroma reverently before he drank. "*Mordieu*, it is exquisite!"

But while the rest of us drank deeply of the almost priceless vintage little Mrs. Bartrow scarcely moistened her lips, and at the bottom of her eyes when they turned toward her father-in-law was a look that made me shiver. And in her soft, low voice there came a thin, metallic rasp whenever she spoke to him which told of fear and abhorrence. By the way she sat, every nerve tense to the snapping-point, I could see she struggled mightily for self-control.

It made me ill at ease to watch this veiled, silent battle between James Bartrow and his son's wife, and at the first opportunity I murmured an excuse that I had several calls to make and hastened to the outside air.

I shot the starter to my car and turned toward home, wondering if I had not imagined it all, but:

"*Tiens*, my friend, the situation, it is interesting, *n'est-ce-pas?*" remarked de Grandin.

"The situation?" I countered. "How do you mean?"

"*Ah bab*, you do play the dummy merely for the pleasure of being stubborn! What should I mean? Does the welcomed-home bride customarily regard her hitherto unknown *beau-père* as a bird might greet a suddenly-met serpent? And does the father-in-law usually welcome home his son's wife with an expression which might have done great credit to the wicked, so hungry wolf when *la petite Chaperon Rouge* came tap-tapping at her grandmamma's cottage-door? I damn think not."

"You're crazy," I assured him testily. "It's unfortunate, I'll admit; but there's no ground for you to build one of your confounded mysteries on here."

"U'm? And what is your explanation?" he returned in a flat, accentless tone.

"Why, I can only think that Bartrow reminds his daughter-in-law irresistibly of someone she fears and hates through and through, and——"

"*Précisément*," he agreed with a vigorous nod, "and that someone she must have hated with a hate to make our estimates of hatred pale and watery. More, she must have feared him as a mediæval anchorite feared erotic dreams. Perhaps, also, since you are in explanatory mood at present, you will explain the look of recognition—of diabolic, devilish surprised recognition—which came upon Monsieur Bartrow's face as he beheld the young *Madame* for the first time?"

"*Hein?*" he prodded as I was silent.

"Oh, I don't know," I answered shortly. "It *was* queer, confoundedly queer, but——"

"But I have small doubt we shall learn more anon than we now know," he interrupted complacently. "Me, I think we have not seen the last act of this so interesting little play, my friend."

WE HAD not. The sun had hardly commenced to stain the eastern sky next morning when the nagging chatter of my bedside telephone roused me and Ransome Bartrow's frightened voice implored my services. "Sylvia—it's Sylvia!" he told me breathlessly. "She's in a dreadful state!" then crashed the 'phone receiver back into its hook before I had a chance to ask him what the trouble was.

Alert as a cat, however deeply he might seem immersed in sleep, de Grandin was at my side before I finished dressing, and when I told him Ransome wanted me he dashed back to his room, donned his clothes with more speed than a fireman responding to a third alarm and joined me at the curb as I made ready to dash across town to the Bartrow home.

The chill of early morning drove the last trace of sleep from our eyes as we

rushed through the quiet streets, and we were efficiently awake when Ransome Bartrow met us at the door.

"I don't know what it is—something's frightened her terribly—a burglar, perhaps—I can't get anything out of her!" he answered my preliminary questions as we trailed him up the stairs. "She's almost in collapse, Doctor. For God's sake, do something for her!"

Sylvia Bartrow was a pitiful figure as she lay in her bed. Her little, heart-shaped face seemed to have shrunk, and her big gray eyes appeared to have widened till they almost obscured her other features. Her cheeks were pale as the linen against which they lay, and her gaze was filmed with unspeakable horror. Without being told, I knew her whole being was vibrant with a desperate agony of terror, and I have never seen a glance more heartrending than the dumb, imploring look she cast on her husband as he entered.

"Shock," I pronounced after a hurried look, and turned to my medicine kit to fill a syringe with tincture digitalis. Plainly this case was too severe for aromatic amonia or similar simple remedies.

"Shock?" young Bartrow repeated stupidly.

"*Mais oui*," de Grandin explained patiently, "it is the relaxation of the controlling influence exercised by the nervous system on the vital organic functions of the body, my friend. Any extraordinary emotional stress may cause it, especially in women. What happened to affright *Madame* your wife? Surely, you were here?"

"No, I wasn't," Ransome confessed. "I couldn't sleep, and I'd gone downstairs. It's hot in Arizona, far hotter than here, but this damned damp heat is strange to me, and I couldn't bear lying in bed any longer. I'd about made up my mind to go out on the front porch

and lie in a hammock when I heard Sylvia scream, and rushed up here to find her like this."

"Um? And you heard nothing else?"

"No—er—yes; I did! As I dashed up the stairs, two at a time, I could have sworn I heard someone or something moving down the hall, but——"

"Some *thing*, *Monsieur*—can you not be more explicit?"

"Well, it sounded as though it might have been a man in stocking feet or rubber-soled shoes or—once while I was in the West a fool puma got into the upper story of the shack where I was sleeping and dashed around like a crazy thing till it found the open window and jumped out again. That's the way those footsteps—if they were footsteps—sounded. Like a great, soft-footed animal, sir."

"*Exactement*," the Frenchman nodded gravely. "And *Monsieur* your father, you did call him?"

"I did, but Dad sleeps on the floor above, and his door was locked. I could hear him snoring in his room, and I couldn't seem to get any response to my knocking, so I telephoned Doctor Trowbridge.

"Will she recover—she's not dying, Doctor?" he asked in terror, coming to my side and looking at his wife with brimming eyes and quivering lips.

"Nonsense—of course, she's not dying!" I answered, looking up from the watch by which I timed the girl's pulse. "She's been badly frightened by something, but her heart action is getting stronger all the time. We'll give her a sedative in a little while, and she'll be practically as well as ever when she wakes up. I'd advise her to stay in bed and eat sparingly for the next day or two, though, and I'll leave some bromides to be taken every hour for the rest of today."

"Hadjn't we better notify the police?"

It might have been a burglar she saw," Ransome suggested.

Jules de Grandin walked to the window and thrust his head out. "It is twenty feet sheer to the ground with nothing a cat might climb," he remarked after a brief survey. "Your burglar did not enter here." Then: "You were on the lower floor when *Madame* alarmed you with her cry. Tell me, which way did the footsteps you heard seem to go?"

Ransome thought a moment, then: "It's hard to say exactly, but they *seemed* to go up, though——"

"A servant, perhaps?"

"No, I don't think so. The servants all sleep in the left wing on this floor, and I'm pretty sure none of 'em would have been up at that hour. But it might have been the burglar running toward the roof. Shall we look?"

We searched the third story of the house, with the exception of the chamber where James Bartrow lay in decidedly audible slumber, but nowhere did we find a trace of the intruder. At the stairway leading to the trap-door in the roof we paused, then turned away in disappointment. The door had long been secured by half a dozen twenty-penny nails driven through frame and casing. Nothing less than a battering-ram could have loosened it.

"Well, it's past me," Ransome confessed.

"You, perhaps, but not Jules de Grandin," the Frenchman answered. "I am interested, I am intrigued; my curiosity is aroused. I shall seek an explanation."

"Where?"

"Where but from *Madame* Sylvia? It was she who saw the intruder; who else can tell us more of him?"

"But, she's too ill——"

"Assuredly; I would not harass her with questions at this time; but when she

is recovered we shall learn from her what it was that came. Me, I have already an idea, but I should like her to confirm it. Then we can take such measures as may be needed to guard against a recurrence. Yes. Certainly."

OFFICE hours were over and I was preparing to go upstairs and dress for dinner when James Bartrow stalked into my consulting-room. "See here, Trowbridge," he announced in his customary brusque manner. "I feel like hell on Sunday; I want you to help me snap out of it."

"All right," I acquiesced, "I think that can be arranged. What seems to be the trouble?"

He bit the end from a cigar of man-killing proportions, set it alight with the flame from his hammered gold lighter and blew a cloud of smoke toward me across the desk. "Ever feel like kicking a cripple's crutch out from under him?" he demanded. "Ever say to yourself when you were alone in the room with someone—especially if his back were turned to you—'It would take only one blow to knock him dead. Go on, hit him?'" He exhaled another smoke-wreath and regarded me through the drifting white wreaths with an intent look which was almost a challenging glare.

Despite the man's seriousness, I could not repress a grin. "Certainly, I have," I answered. "Everybody has those inexplicable impulses to do mischief. Men are only little boys grown up, you know; the principal difference is the normal adult recognizes the childishness of these impulses and dismisses them from his mind. The child gives way to them, so does the subnormal adult whose mind has retained its infantile stature after his body had developed.

"You've been working pretty hard at the office lately, haven't you?" I added,

more as a peg on which to hang whatever treatment I recommended than as an actual question.

"No, I haven't," he assured me shortly. "I've been taking things devilish easy, and if you start any of that fool stuff about my needing to go away for a rest I'll clout you on the head; but——"

He paused, drew a deep inhalation from his cigar and expelled the smoke almost explosively, then:

"I might as well get it out," he exclaimed. "It's my daughter-in-law, Sylvia. Never saw anything like it. The moment I met the girl yesterday afternoon something seemed to snap like a steel trap inside my head. 'There she is,' a voice inside me seemed to say, 'you've got her at last; there she is, ready to your hand! Kill her, kill her; do it now!' Hanged if I didn't almost leap on the poor kid and strangle her where she stood, too. I know I frightened her, for I must have shown the insane impulse in my face as soon as my eyes lit on her. It was the scared look in her eyes that brought me to my senses. The impulse passed as quickly as it came, but for a moment I thought I was going to flop down in a faint; it left me weak as a cat."

"H'm," I murmured professionally. "You say this seizure came on you the moment you saw——"

"Yes, but that's not all," he interrupted. "I shouldn't be here if it were. I managed to shake off the desire to injure her—perhaps I'd better say it left of its own accord in a second—but last night I'd no sooner fallen asleep than I began dreaming of her. Lord!" He passed a handkerchief over his face, and I saw his hands were trembling. "I dreamed I was walking through a great, dark wood or grove of some sort. The biggest oak trees I've ever seen were everywhere about, their branches seemed to interlace overhead and shut out every vestige of light.

Suddenly I came to the biggest tree of all, and as I halted a shaft of moonlight pierced through an opening in its foliage, letting a pencil of luminance down like a spotlight in a darkened theater. Before me, in the center of that beam of light, lay Sylvia, dressed in some sort of long, loose, flowing robe of thin white cloth, with a wreath of wild roses twined in her unbound hair. She was drawn back against the gnarled roots of the tree in a half-reclining position, her wrists and ankles fastened to them with slender wicker withes. As I stopped beside her she looked up in my face with such an expression of mingled pleading and fear that it ought to have melted my heart; but it didn't. Not by a damn sight. Instead, it seemed to incense me—set me wild with a maniacal desire to kill—and I reached down, tore her dress away from her bosom and was about to plunge a knife into her breast when she screamed, and the dream winked out like an extinguished candle-flame. Queer, too; I kept right on dreaming, realizing that I'd been dreaming of killing Sylvia and regretting that I hadn't been able to finish the crime. In my second dream I seemed to be deliberately wooing the return of the murder-dream, so I could take it up where I left off, like beginning a new installment of a story which had been continued at an exciting incident. Man, I tell you I never wanted anything in my life the way I wanted to kill that girl, and I've a feeling I shouldn't have stopped at mere murder if I'd been able to finish that dream!"

"*Pardonnez-moi, Messieurs,*" de Grandin entered the consulting-room like an actor responding to a cue. "I was passing, I recognized Monsieur Bartrow's voice; I could not help but hear what he said.

"*Monsieur,*" he directed a level, unwinking stare at the visitor, "what you dreamed last night was not altogether a

dream. No, there was action, as well as vision there. This afternoon, because the good Trowbridge was overburdened with work, I took it on myself to call on Madame Sylvia. It is not the physician's province to interrogate the servants, but this is more than a mere medical case. I felt it before, now I am assured of it. Therefore, I made discreet inquiries among your domestic staff, and from the laundress I did learn that a *chemise de nuit* of Madame Sylvia had been torn longitudinally—above the breast, even as you tore her robe in your dream, *Monsieur*."

"Well?" Bartrow demanded.

"Non, by no means, it is not well, my friend; it is very far otherwise. You are perhaps aware that Madame Sylvia's indisposition arises from a fright she sustained from some unknown cause—a burglar, the hypothesis has been thus far?"

"Well?" Bartrow repeated, his face hardening.

"*Monsieur*, that burglar could not be found, neither hide nor hair of him could be discovered, though Doctor Trowbridge, your son and I did search your house with a comb of the fine teeth. No. For why?" He paused, regarding Bartrow and me alternately with his alert, cat-like stare.

"All right, 'for why?' " Bartrow demanded sharply when the silence had stretched to an uncomfortable length.

"Because, *Monsieur*"—de Grandin paused impressively—"because *you were that burglar!*"

"You're mad!"

"Not at all, I was never more sane; it is you who stand upon the springboard above the pool of madness, *Monsieur*. For why you had this impulse to slay a wholly inoffensive young lady whom you had never seen before, neither you nor we can say at this time with any manner of assurance; but that you had it and that

it was almost overwhelming in its strength, even at its first onset, you admit. Consider: You understand the *psychologie?*"

"I know something of the principles."

"*Bien*. You know, then, that our conscious mind—the mind of external things—acts as the governor of our actions as the little whirling balls control the engine's speed. Do you also realize that it acts as a sort of mental policeman? Good, again.

"Now, when we wish to do a little naughty thing—or a great one, for that matter—and the sound common sense of this daytime conscious mind of ours overcomes the impulse, we say we have put it from our mind. Ah ha! It is there that we most greatly delude ourselves. Certainly. We have not put it from us; far otherwise; we have *repressed* it. As the businessman would say, we have 'filed it for future reference.' Yes. Often, by good fortune, the file is lost. Occasionally, it is found, only to be repressed once more by the conscious mind.

"But when normal conscious control is overthrown, one or all of these stored-away naughty desires come bubbling to the surface. Every surgeon has seen this demonstrated when nicely brought up young ladies or religious old gentlemen are recovering from anesthesia. *Cordieu*, the language they employ would put a coal-heaver to the blush!

"Attend me, if you please: The restraint of consciousness is entirely absent when we sleep—the policeman has put away his club and uniform and gone on a vacation. Then it is we dream all manner of strange, queer things. Then it is that a repressed desire, if it be strong enough, becomes translated into action while the dreamer is in a state of somnambulism. Then it was, *Monsieur*, you walked from out your room and would have done in earnest what you perpetrated in your

dream had not Madame Sylvia's scream summoned back some portion of the inhibitions of your waking self, so that you forbore to murder her, although the lingering remnant of your dream-desire stayed with you, and made you wish to do so."

The skeptical look on Bartrow's face gave way to an expression of grudging belief as the little Frenchman expanded his theory. "Well, what's to be done?" he demanded as de Grandin finished.

"I would suggest that you pack your golf clubs and go to Lake Hopatcong or the Kobbskill Club for a brief stay. There are certain matters we would attend to, and in the meantime you may recover from this so strange impulse to do your daughter-in-law an injury; I greatly fear you may do that for which you will be everlastingly sorrowful, should you remain.

"Do not mistake me," he added as Bartrow was about to form a rebellious reply, "it is no matter of exiling you from your own house, nor yet of cutting you from all communication from your son and his wife always. Quite no. We would have you absent for only a little while—no longer than is absolutely necessary—while we make arrangements. Be assured we shall write you to return at the earliest possible moment."

So it was arranged. Pleading frayed-out nerves and doctor's orders, James Bartrow left for Hopatcong that evening, leaving Ransome and his wife in possession of the house.

"Well, everything's satisfactorily arranged for a while, at least," I remarked as we returned from the station after seeing Bartrow off. "A few days of golf and laziness will probably sweep those cobwebs from his mind, and he'll be right as rain when he returns."

The little Frenchman shook his head. "We have disposed of only half the problem, and that but temporarily," he re-

turned gloomily. "Why Monsieur Bartrow looked so strangely at his new daughter we know, though we do not know what caused the homicidal impulse which was behind the look; but why *she* regarded *him* with terror—ah, that is a far different matter, my friend, and one which needs explaining."

"Nonsense!" I scoffed. "Why shouldn't she be afraid? What girl wouldn't be terrified if she saw a man look at her like that?"

"You do forget their recognition—and revulsion—was mutual and simultaneous," he reminded.

We finished our drive in silence.

SYLVIA BARTROW lay in a long wicker deck-chair in the cool angle of the piazza, an orchid negligée trimmed with marabou about her slender shoulders, an eiderdown rug gathered about her feet and knees. Though her improvement had been steady since her fright a week before, she was still pale with a pallor not to be disguised by the most skilfully applied cosmetics, and the dark violet circles still showed beneath her big, melancholy gray eyes. She greeted de Grandin and me with the faintest ghost of a smile as we mounted the porch steps.

"Madame, that we must trouble you thus drives us to the border of despair," the Frenchman declared as he took her pallid fingers and raised them to his lips, "but there are several questions we must ask. Believe me, it is of importance, or we should not be thus disturbing you."

The girl smiled at him with something like affection, for his uniform politeness endeared him to every woman from nine to ninety, and nodded amiably. "I'll tell you anything I can, Doctor de Grandin," she replied.

"Good. You are kind as you are beautiful, which is to say your generosity exceeds that of the good St. Nicholas," he

assured her as he drew up a chair, then:

"Tell us, *Madame*, just what it was that frightened you so terribly last week. Speak with confidence; whatever you may say is spoken under the seal of medical inviolability."

She knit her brows, and her big eyes turned upward, like those of a little girl striving desperately to recall her seven-times table. "I—don't—know," she answered slowly. "I know it sounds silly—impossible, even—but I can't remember a single thing that happened that night after I fell asleep. You'd think anything which frightened any one as much as I was frightened would be impressed on him in all its detail till his dying day; but the truth is I only remember I was terribly, horribly afraid of something which came to my room, and that's all. I can't even tell you whether it was human or animal. Maybe it was just an awful dream, and I'm just a silly child afraid of something which never was."

"U'm, perhaps," de Grandin agreed with a nod. Then: "Tell me, if you please, *Madame Sylvia*, were you frightened before this so unfortunate occurrence? Did anything distress you at any time, or seem to——"

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "When I first entered the drawing-room, I went nearly wild with fright. When I looked at Daddy Jim standing there by the fireplace everything seemed to go red-hot inside me from my toes to my throat; I wanted to scream, but couldn't; I wanted to run away, but didn't have the strength. And when he turned and looked at me—I thought I should die. Just imagine, and Daddy Jim's such a nice old darling, too!"

"This feeling of terror, it passed away?" de Grandin pursued seriously.

"Yes—no; not immediately. After I'd met him I realized it *couldn't* have been Daddy Jim who frightened me, really, but

there was a feeling of malaise which clung to me till——"

"Yes—till?" the Frenchman prompted as she hesitated.

"Till the big fright came and drove the little one away."

"Ah, so. You had never, by any chance, known any one whom you feared and hated who resembled your so estimable father-in-law?"

"Why, no. I don't think I was really afraid of any one in my life—every one has always been kind to me, you know, and as for hating anybody, I don't think I could, really. I was just a little girl during the World War, and I used to try so hard to hate the Kaiser and von Hindenburg, but I never seemed able to do it as the other children could."

"I congratulate you," he commented noncommittally. "This so strange feeling of uneasiness, you still have it?"

"No-o, I don't. I did until——" She stopped, and her pale face suffused with a faint blush.

"Yes, *ma petite*, until?" he prompted softly, leaning forward and taking her fingers lightly in his hand. "I think I know what you would say, but I do desire confirmation from your own lips."

"It's no use," she answered as tears welled in her eyes. "I've tried to down it, to say it wasn't so for Rance's sake, but it is—it is! It's Daddy Jim—I'm afraid of him—terrified. There's no earthly reason for it; he's a dear, good, kind old man, and he loves Rance to distraction and loves me for Rance's sake, but I live in constant horror of him. When he looks at me I go cold and tremble all over, and if he so much as brushes against my skirts as he passes I have to bite my lips to keep from screaming. When he kissed me that day I thought my heart would stop."

"I can't explain it, Doctor de Grandin,

but the feeling's there, and I can't overcome it. Listen:

"When I was a little girl we lived on the outskirts of Flagstaff, and I had a little Maltese kitten for pet. One day I saw Muff with her back up and every hair on her tail standing straight out and her eyes fairly blazing with rage and fright as she backed slowly away from something on the ground and spit and growled with every breath. When I ran up I saw she was looking at a young rattlesnake which had come out to sun itself. That kitten had never seen a rattler or any kind of snake in all her little life, but she recognized it as something to be feared and hated—yes, *hated*—the moment she laid eyes on it. Her instinct told her. That's the way it is with me and my husband's father. Oh, Doctor de Grandin, it makes me so unhappy! I want to love him and have him love me, and I don't want to come between Rance and him, for they're all the world to each other, but——" The tears which jeweled her eyelids gushed freely now, and her narrow shoulders shook with sobs. "I try to love him," she wailed, "but I'm dreadfully afraid of him—I loathe him!"

"I knew as much already, *ma pauvre*," the Frenchman comforted, "but be of cheer, already I think I have found a way to remove this barrier which stands between you and your father-in-law. Your fear of him is grown from something deep within you, a something which none of us can as yet understand, yet which must have its roots in reason. That reason we shall endeavor to find. If you will come to Doctor Trowbridge's tonight, we shall probe the underlying causes for this feeling of revulsion which so greatly troubles you."

"You—you won't hurt me?" she faltered. Plainly terror and sustained mental tension had broken her nerve, and her

only thought was to avoid pain at any cost.

"Name of a little blue man, I shall say otherwise!" he exclaimed. "You and *Monsieur* your husband shall come to dinner, and afterward we shall talk—that is all. You are not terrified of that?"

"Of course not," she replied. "That will be delightful."

"*Très bon*, until tonight, then," once more he raised her hand to his lips, then turned and left her with a smile.

"**W**HAT do you make of it?" I asked as we drove homeward. "Doesn't it strike you she's trying to evade a direct answer when she says she can't remember what frightened her?"

"Not necessarily," he returned thoughtfully. "She deceives herself, but she does so honestly, I think. Consider: She is of a decidedly neurotic type, you are agreed on that?"

I nodded.

"Very good. Like most of her kind, she is naturally very sensitive, and would suffer keenly were it not for the protective mental armor she has developed. The other night she had an experience which would have driven more matter-of-fact persons into neurasthenia, but not her. No. She said mentally to herself, 'This thing which I have seen is dreadful, it is too terrible to be true. If I remember it I go mad. *Alors*, I shall not remember it. It is not so.' And thereupon, as far as her conscious memory is concerned, it is not so. She does not realize she has given herself this mental command, nor does she know she has obeyed, but the fact remains she has. The extreme mental torture she suffered when the apparition appeared before her is buried deeply in her subconscious memory—mentally cica-trized, we might say, for she has protected her sanity by the sudden development of a sort of selective amnesia. It is

better so; she might easily go mad otherwise. But tonight we shall open wide the secret storehouse of her memory, we shall see the thing which affrighted her in all its grisly reality, and we shall take it from her recollection forever. Yes. Never shall it trouble her again."

"Hump, you talk as though you were going to exorcise a demon," I commented.

He raised his shoulders and eyebrows in an eloquent shrug. "Who shall say otherwise?" he asked. "Long years ago, when the scientific patter we mouth so learnedly today had not been thought of, men called such things which troubled them by short and ugly names. She-devils which seduced the souls and bodies of men they called succubi; male demons which worked their will on women they denominated incubi. Today we talk of repressed desires, of unconscious libido, and such-like things—but have we gotten further than to change our terminology? One wonders. A tree you may denominate an oyster, and you may call an oyster a tree with equal ease, but all your new denominations to the contrary notwithstanding, the tree is still a tree, and the oyster nothing but an oyster. *N'est-ce pas?*"

ADDED to his numerous other accomplishments, Jules de Grandin possessed unquestioned talents as a chef. He was the only man Nora McGinnis, my household factotum, would permit in her kitchen for longer than five minutes at a time, for across the kitchen range they met and gossipped as fellow artists, and many were the toothsome recipes they traded. That afternoon he was long in conference with my gifted though temperamental cook, and the result was a dinner the like of which has seldom been served in Harrisonville. Shrimp gumbo preceded lobster Cardinal and caneton à la presse followed lobster, while a salad

garnished with a sauce which surely came from fairyland accompanied the duckling. From heaven alone knew where, de Grandin procured a bottle of Mirandol '93, and this, with one of Nora's famous deep-dish apple tarts and fromage Suisse completed the perfect meal.

Coffee and cognac were served on the side veranda, and while we enjoyed the delightful sensation of the mingled processes of digestion and slow poisoning by nicotine de Grandin took possession of the conversation.

"Your estimable father," he began, addressing Ransome, "he is a connoisseur of interior decoration; his drawing-room, it is delightful. That walnut wainscot, by example, it is——"

"Good Lord, you'd better not let Dad hear you call it walnut!" Ransome broke in with a laugh. "He'd have your life. That's oak, man; he imported it especially from England, bought it standing in an old house in Kent, and it cost him almost its weight in gold to bring it over. Oak's always been the passion of Dad's life, it seems to me. He's got a hundred or more pieces of antique oak—which is twice as rare as walnut, maple or mahogany—in the house, there are nothing but oak trees growing in the grounds, and every walking-stick he owns is carved from solid oak. He has to have 'em 'specially made, for they can't be had in the shops. I've seen him pick up an acorn in the woods and fondle it as a miser might a diamond."

"Eh, do you tell me so?" de Grandin's fingers beat a quick devil's tattoo on the arm of his chair. "This is of the interest. Yes. Is it that he also collects other *objets d'art?*"

"No-o, I couldn't say that, though he has a small collection of curios in the place. There's that old stone, for instance. He brought it from a place called Pwhyll-gor in Wales years ago, and has it

framed in native oak and hung up on the wall of his room. I never could see much sense in it; it looks pretty much like any other bit of flat, smooth rock to me, but Dad says it once formed part of a big ring of Cromlech and——"

"*Mort d'un rat âgé*, the light; I begin to commence to see!" exclaimed the Frenchman.

"What?"

"*Mille pardons*, my friend, I did but think aloud, and all too often I think that way at random. You were saying——"

"Oh, that's all there is to his collection, really. He's got a few curious old arrowheads, and a stone knife-blade or two, but I don't suppose a real collector would give him twenty dollars for the lot."

"*Certainement*; not if he were wise," de Grandin agreed.

Deftly he turned the talk to matters of psychology, detailing several interesting cases of split personality he had witnessed in the laboratories of the Sorbonne. "I have here, by happy chance, an interesting little toy which has of late received much use in the clinics," he added, apparently as an afterthought. "Would not you care to see it?"

Prompted by a sharp kick on the shins, I declared that nothing would please me more, and Ransome and Sylvia assented, mainly for politeness' sake.

"Behold it, is it not most innocent-looking?" he asked, proudly displaying an odd-looking contraption by means of which two circular looking-glasses, slightly smaller than shaving-mirrors, were made to rotate in opposing directions by means of a miniature motor.

"Is it dangerous?" asked Sylvia, her woman's curiosity slightly piqued.

"Not especially," he returned, "but it gives one queer sensations if one watches it in motion. Will you try?"

Without awaiting their reply he set the machine on the study table, switched off all the lights save the central bulb which shed its beams directly on the mirrors, and pressed the switch.

A light sustained humming sounded through the room, and the mirrors began describing their opposing orbits round each other at ever-increasing speed. I watched their dazzling whirl for a moment, but turned my eyes away as de Grandin tweaked me gently by the sleeve. "Not for you, Friend Trowbridge," he whispered almost soundlessly; then:

"Behold them, my friends, how they spin and whirl, is it not a pretty sight? Look carefully, you can distinguish the different speeds at which they turn. Closer, hold your gaze intently on them for a moment. Thus you may find—sleep—sleep, my friends. You are tired, you are *fatigués*, you are exhausted. Sleep is good—very good. Sleep—sleep—sleep!"

His voice took on a low, singsong drone as he repeated the admonition to repose again and yet again. Finally: "That is well. Be scared, if you please."

Like twin automata Ransome Bartrow and his bride sank into the chairs he hastily pushed forward. For a moment he regarded them thoughtfully, then snapped off the current from the motor and once more lit the lamps. Like a showman arranging his puppets, or a window-dresser disposing his figurines, he touched them lightly here and there, placing hands and feet in more restful positions, slipping cushions behind each reclining head. Then:

"Madame Sylvia, you hear me?" he asked softly.

"Yes," the reply was hardly audible as the girl breathed it lightly.

"Very good. Attend me carefully: It is the night of your arrival here. You

have gone to bed. You are asleep. What transpires?"

No answer.

"*Très bon*; all is yet quiet. It is two hours later. Do you see, do you hear anything?"

Still silence.

"*Bien*. It is the moment at which the intruder entered your chamber. What is it? *Who* is it? *Whom* do you see?" His final question came with sharp, sudden emphasis.

FOR a moment the girl reclined quietly in her easy-chair; then a light, moaning sound escaped her. She rolled her head restlessly from side to side, like a sleeper suffering a disagreeable dream, and her breathing came more quickly.

"Speak! I demand to know what you see—whom you see!" he ordered harshly.

A quick, convulsive shudder ran through her, and with a sudden, writhing movement she slipped from her chair and lay supine on the floor. Her eyelids were slightly parted, but the eyeballs were so far rolled back that only a tiny glistening crescent of white showed between her lashes. Again she moaned softly; then the whole expression of her features changed. She thrust her head a little forward, her pale cheeks flushed red, her mouth half opened and a desirous smile lay upon her lips. She raised her hands, making little downward passes before her face, as though she stroked the cheeks of one who bent above her, and a gentle tremor ran through her as her slim bosom expanded slightly and her mouth opened and closed in a pantomime of kissing. A deep sigh of ardent ecstasy issued from between her white teeth.

"*Grand Dieu*, what have we here?" de Grandin muttered nervously. "*C'est un incubé!* Behold, Friend Trowbridge, from feet to head she is a vessel that fills

itself with the sweet pains of love! What does it mean?"

But even as he spoke the tableau changed. With a sudden wrench she moved to free herself from the bonds of an amorous embrace, and on her countenance, but lately beatified with passionate love, there came a look of stark and abject terror. One arm was thrown across her face, as if to ward away a blow, and her breast rose and fell in labored respiration. Her cheeks again were pale, as if every vestige of blood had left them, even her lips were grayish-blue.

She struggled to her knees, and crept writhingly away till the wall cut off her retreat, and then she groveled on the floor, her forehead lowered, hands clasped protectively upon the upturned nape of her neck, and all the while she shook and trembled like a palsied thing.

From her blanched lips came a spate of words, but strange, foreign words they were, seemingly all consonants, and in a language I could not identify.

Then, at de Grandin's sharp command she turned to English, crying: "Mercy, my Lord! Is it sin that a woman young and fair should love? Look on this form, this body and these limbs——" She rose and faced an invisible accuser, her head thrown back, her hands outspread, as one who would display her charms to best advantage. "Was not I formed for loving and for love?" she asked. "How can I ever be the cold and stony-hearted servant of your order? 'Tis love that I was made for and love which I did crave. Can a woman's soul be forfeit if she does listen to the prompting of her woman's heart?"

"O-o-h!" her shrill scream rent the quiet of the room. "Not that; not that, my Lord—anything but that! See!"—she sank upon her knees and looked up plead-

(Continued on page 568)

The Druid's Shadow

(Continued from page 454)

ingly while with eloquent, outflung hands she made a gesture of supreme surrender—"see me as I kneel before thee! See this body, so soft, so tender, so full of delight; it is thine—all, all thine, if only thou wilt spare me—*o-o-ob—o-o-o-ob—ai-ee!*" Again her frantic scream set my nerves a-tingle, and I thanked the heavenly powers that cries of pain would cause less public comment coming from a doctor's house than any other place.

She balled her fingers into diminutive fists and wrestled back and forth as though her wrists were in the vise-like grip of some grim, relentless captor.

Her eyes were open now, wide open, and filmed with horror indescribable. Her face was deathly pale, her whole body vibrant with an agony of desperate fear. In silence now she struggled, but how! She was like a madwoman, clawing, twisting, writhing. She turned her head and spat into an invisible face; she dug her feet into the rug, tried to fling herself prostrate, twined herself about her captor; once she bent swiftly and I heard the snap of her small, sharp teeth as she went through the dumb show of fleshing them in a man's arm. Her face was livid, scarcely like a living thing.

Now her struggles lessened. Her shrieks subsided to weak whimpers, and she followed pitifully, though reluctantly, in the wake of her unseen conductor like a little broken-spirited child led out for punishment. Her arms were stretched before her, hands drooping, as though her wrists were held fast in a powerful grip. Her head bent listlessly, rolled and lolled from side to side, as if extremity of terror had sapped her last shred of vitality, leaving her scarcely strong enough to stand erect.

But once again she galvanized to action. Apparently they were come to their destination, for she halted, struggled backward a moment, then held one hand out from her side as though it were being made fast to something.

And I swear I could see the marks of the invisible ligature as the cord was tightly drawn about her wrist!

Now the other hand was pinioned and now her slender ankles were crossed one upon another, and one after another we saw the furrows form, saw the silk-meshed stockings sink in on the shrinking flesh as invisible bonds were cruelly tightened.

She half leaned, half lay across a chair-arm, her body taut and rigid as a drawn bow, white and still as a lovely Andromeda carved in marble, and in her misty, tear-gemmed eyes was such a look of tragic, mute appeal as nearly broke my heart. She held her fixed, unnatural pose until my muscles ached in sympathy. "Good heavens," I exclaimed, "de Grandin, this is terrible, we must——"

"Observe, my friend, he comes, he is arrived, he is here!" the Frenchman's shout drowned out my protest as he seized me by the elbow and swung me round.

My heart all but ceased to beat as I turned. Framed in the window of the study, like a portrait of incarnate evil and malevolence executed by a master craftsman, was the face of James Bartrow.

But such a face! Gone was every vestige of the urbane man of the world I knew, and in its place there was the very distillation of savagery, wild, insane rage and lust for killing. His matted hair lay on his forehead, his beard was fairly bristling with ferocity, and on his

tight-drawn lips there sat a sneering smile of mingled hate and murderous blood-lustfulness.

"So," he cried, and his voice was thin and cracked with madness, "so, I find ye, do I? Too long ye've robbed me of my vengeance, ye filth-filled vessel of pollution. The Gods cry out for sacrifice, and here am I, their servant and their priest, prepared to render them their due!"

With one gigantic heave he tore the copper screen from out the window and drew himself up to the sill. A moment he crouched there, like a great, savage cat about to spring; then with a leap he cleared the intervening space and towered over Sylvia. I started as I saw the gleam of something white in his right hand. It was a long and slender blade chipped from flint, the sort of weapon I'd seen in museums.

"I all but slew ye in the grove of Cambrria," he roared, "and by the heart I would have plucked from your breast I would have made my divinations; but ye did escape me then. This time I have ye fairly. Look on me, Cwerfa, and know your hour is come, for by the stone of Cromlech's ring I brought across the seas, and by the holy mistletoe that grows upon the sacred oak, and by the mystic gem of serpents' spew, I'm here to cut the heart from out your breast as I would have long ago!

"They thought they'd packed me off and gotten rid of me—ha, ha!—but I came back, and when I found ye'd fled the house wherein I kept the Cromlech stone, I knew ye must have sought protection from the Frankish outlander as once before ye found it with the Romans, and here I am to claim your forfeit life, and none shall say me nay!" With a wild, maniacal roar he leaned across the girl and wrenched the flimsy silken drape from her bosom.

"Your pardon, *Monsieur*, but Jules de

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Grandin is here, and he does most emphatically say nay!" the Frenchman interrupted and struck the towering madman a stunning blow upon the head with the carafe of chilled water which stood beside the decanter of brandy on the study table.

The bludgeoned maniac fell crashing to the floor, and almost as he fell de Grandin was on him, wrenching the stone knife from his grasp, tearing a pongee curtain from its rods and twisting it into a rope with which he pinioned Bartrow's wrists behind him and made them fast with double knots.

"And now, my friend, I would that you accompany me at once to this one's residence," he ordered, snatching down another curtain and fastening the prisoner's feet together, then dragging him to the entrance of the study and tethering him securely to one of the white pillars which flanked the doorway. "Come, it is of the greatest import!" he urged. "We have no little moment to stand here stupidly and stare."

Dazed, but goaded by his constant pleas for haste, I drove him to the Bartrow home, and waited while he clamored at the door. He had a brief parley with the servant who responded to his summons, disappeared within the house and emerged a moment later bearing a frame of ancient weathered oak in which was set an oblong of dull, grayish stone. In his left hand he swung a canvas sack like those used by banks for holding minor coins, and in it something clinked and jingled musically.

"I think I have them all," he told me. "Rush, hasten, fly back to your house, my friend. There is work ahead of us!"

He led me to the cellar as soon as we returned, and in the furnace we built a roaring fire of newspapers and stray bits of wood, and when we had it blazing we heaped a few shovelfuls of coal upon it.

As soon as all was glowing he tossed the oak-framed stone and the collection of flint arrowheads into the fiery crater. Last of all he flung in the stone knife he had taken from Bartrow when he struck him down.

THE oak frame of the stone burned furiously, and to my great surprise the stone itself and the arrowheads and knife seemed to offer small resistance to the fire, but turned into a sort of brittle and crumbling lime. We waited fifteen minutes or so, while the fire completed its work of destruction; then the Frenchman seized the heavy iron poker and mashed the burned stone relics into powder, dumped the clinkers into the ash-pit and stirred them all together till none could tell which had been Pennsylvania coal and which the old stone curios which Bartrow prized so highly. "Come, let us see what passes up above," he ordered when he had finished with the poker, and led the way to the study.

Sylvia had fallen to the floor, and de Grandin raised her and placed her comfortably in a chair, then, having rearranged the mutilated corsage of her dress, turned his attention to the still unconscious Bartrow. "I think we may release him, now," he commented, and together we undid the knots and tugged and pulled until we had him in a chair.

"Revive him, if you please," de Grandin ordered, and set the motors of his whirling mirrors going.

I dashed some water into Bartrow's face and held a vial of ammoniated salts to his nostrils, and as his eyelids quivered de Grandin struck him lightly on the cheek. "Observe—look—see here!" he ordered.

Bartrow struggled half-way from his chair, gazed at the spinning mirrors a moment, then sat forward, his gaze riv-

eted to the bright concentric circles they described.

Softly, carefully, forcefully, de Grandin ordered him to sleep, repeating his command until it was obeyed; then, when he had stopped the motor, he moved to the center of the room, and:

"My friends, I bid you listen to me carefully," he ordered. "You, Monsieur Ransome, know nothing of that which has transpired. It is good. Very good. Continue in your ignorance. You, Madame Sylvia, have quite forgotten every fear of olden days, and of the present; to you your father-in-law is but a kindly old gentleman who loves you and whom you love in turn.

"And you, Monsieur Bartrow the elder," he turned his piercing gaze on the older man, "whatever it was which did possess you is gone away. I have destroyed it utterly. No longer will the impulse to murder Madame Sylvia be with you. You hear me? You will—you *must* obey. She is to you the much-loved wife of your much-loved son; no more, no less, and as such you will give her your affection and make her welcome to your heart and home."

He paused a moment, then continued: "You will rise up, go to the street, and in two minutes reappear at the front door of this house, nor will you know that you have called before or why you came. Go. *En avant; allez-vous-en!*"

"Awake, my friends; wake Monsieur Ransome, wake Madame Sylvia; the experiment is done and you are sleeping long!" he cried gayly, snapping his fingers at Ransome and Sylvia in turn. "*Parbleu*, I did think these little dancing mirrors would have made you sleep the clock around!" he added as they opened heavy eyes.

"Did we really fall asleep? How stupid!" Sylvia exclaimed. "I don't think it very nice of you to invite us to dinner,

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then put us to sleep with your horrid apparatus, Doctor de Grandin."

"Ah, *Madame*, I am desolated that it should have happened thus," he answered, "but you are doubtless rested by the nap; come, let us go upon the porch once more and smoke a cigarette."

"Good evening, every one," James Bartrow sauntered out on the veranda, "hope I'm not intruding. I couldn't stand it out at the lake any longer, so I hopped a train and came back to town. They told me you children had gone over here, so I came along to see you were all right. Did they give you a good dinner?"

"Why, Daddy Jim, how nice of you to come!" Sylvia jumped from her chair, threw her arms about her father-in-law's neck and kissed him on both bearded cheeks. "I've been wishing you'd come back," she added.

He patted her shoulder affectionately. "Great girl, eh, Trowbridge?" he asked proudly as he sank into a chair beside me and lighted a cigar.

We chatted inconsequentially for an hour or so; then the Bartrows, on the best of terms with us and with each other, bade us good-night.

"Now," I threatened as the echo of their laughing voices died away, "will you explain all this craziness I've seen tonight, or must I choke an explanation from you?"

He raised his shoulders in a shrug. "*Le bon Dieu* knows," he confessed. "I hardly dare to venture an opinion.

"When first we entered Monsieur Bartrow's house and saw the look of savage exultation on his face when he beheld the little bride, and the expression of stark terror with which she looked at him, I said to me, '*Parbleu*, Jules de Grandin, what are the meaning of this?' And I replied:

"Jules de Grandin, I do not know."

"Your West, he is like our Foreign Legion, the port of men who would be forgotten, and that young Madame Bartrow came from there I knew. Was it that in his younger days the elder Bartrow had sojourned in that country and there had formed a feud with some member of her family? And did he recognize her as a foeman's child the moment he put eyes on her? Perhaps. I could not be sure of anything, and so I waited and wondered.

"A little light came to us when he called here to consult you. He wished to kill her, he declared, he had an impulse almost irresistible to do her injury, and yet he knew not why it was. Ah, but his dream—you do recall? He dreamed he trailed her through a deep, dark grove of oak trees, and there he found her, all bound and helpless, and robed in white. And white, my friend, has almost always been the color of the robe of sacrifice. What could *this* mean? I asked me. The holy angels only know.

"No, there was another one who knew, at least, in part, and Madame Sylvia was she. Held fast within the secret chamber of her mind there was a recollection of her father-in-law's visit. Undoubtedly he spoke when he accosted her; his words would surely give some clue to why he wished her injury. 'Very well, then,' I say to me. 'If Madame Sylvia holds the answer, she shall tell us.'

"And so we did. With dinner I did bait my trap, and when she came I was prepared to make invasion of the secret kingdom of her mind. But first I asked a few small questions of her husband.

"While we were at his house I had noticed certain things concerning it. Within the lovely little park which stands about his home, I had seen nothing but oak trees, little oaks, great oaks, and

oaks which were neither large nor small. That was unusual. Also I noticed much oaken furniture within the house, and the fine Tudor wainscot in the drawing-room.

"And so I asked about the wood, leading young Monsieur Ransome to correct what he thought my mistake, that he might speak more freely, and thus I learned of his father's so strange passion for oak. Also he told me of the foolish whim which made his father import and keep a Druid stone from Wales. Ah, that also was important, but just why I could not say at that time. No, I needed further information.

"So I interrogated Madame Sylvia. *Tiens*, there I was like Monsieur Robin the tailor in your so droll nursery rime, he who

... bent his bow,
Shot at a sparrow
And killed a crow.

For where I sought only to unlatch the darkened window and let in light upon her little fear, behold, I opened wide the door upon a fearsome memory so dreadful that almost countless generations had not been long enough to bury it beneath their years. Yes."

"What do you mean?" I asked, bewildered.


He gazed at me a moment, then: "What is instinct?" he demanded.

"Why, I suppose you might call it an innate quality, apart from reason or experience, which prompts animals of the same species to react to certain definite stimuli in the same manner."

"Very good," he complimented. "The day-old chick needs no example to teach it to pick up grains of corn, the newborn infant needs not to be told to take the breast—Madame Sylvia's little kitten required none to tell him that the serpent was his deadly foe. No.

"But *why* is instinct. What makes it?

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See inside cover, opposite first page, for important announcement in this issue.

It is mass memory, transmitted from our earliest forebears, and stored up in our subconscious minds for use in emergency. Nothing less.

"But we have other memories from other times. Take, by example, the common dream of falling through space. Who has not had it? For why? Because it is a racial memory. It dates from the remote day when our ancestors dwelt in trees. With them the danger of death by falling was always present. Many died thus, all at one time or other fell and were injured more or less severely. Now, any serious injury produced shock, and shock in turn produced certain definite molecular changes in the tissues of the brain. These were transmitted to the fallers' progeny. *Voilà*, we have the racial memory.

"Now, consider: Though every one has dreamed he fell—and often wakened in an agony of terror—we never have this sense of falling while we are awake. No. Why is that? Because our waking, *modern* personality knows no such danger. Ah, then, you see? It must be another personality, distinct from that we have while waking, which dreams of falling, a personality which has a recollection of falling from a tree or over a great cliff.

"Very well. In everyday experience we meet with men who have extraordinary memories; they can remember accurately events which happened when they were but three or four years old. Such men are rare, yet they do exist.

"Very good. Why is it not then possible that there may live those who can remember the days of long ago—who can recall what happened to an ancestor of theirs as an *individual*, rather than to their whole ancestry as a group? I do not mean *consciously*, remember. But no. I mean they have the memory latent, as

we all have the falling-through-space memory when we are asleep.

"Place such an one as this in a state of hypnosis, where there is no interference from the conscious mind of the wake-a-day world, and that other, buried, memory might easily be resurrected. *N'est-ce-pas?*"

"But Bartrow and Sylvia seemed to recognize each other simultaneously, and they were wide awake when they did it," I objected.

"*Précisément*. You have expressed it. It is strange, it is odd, it is almost unbelievable, but it is true. Of all the millions in the world, those two, the one with strange, uncanny memory of a thwarted vengeance, the other with the dreadful recollection of a terrible ordeal, were brought together. And as steel strikes sparks from flint, so did their personalities enkindle the light of memory in each, though the memory was vague, and he knew not the reason for his hatred of her and she could not find reason for her fear of him.

"But from what we saw and heard tonight we can piece the gruesome puzzle into something like the semblance of a picture. Long, long ago, an ancestor of Bartrow's was a Druid, perhaps an Arch-druid—one of those awful priests who served and worshipped nameless gods in groves of oak. Diodorus Siculus described their rites of divination by means of hearts and entrails plucked from living human sacrifices; Caesar, in his *De Bello Gallico*, mentions the burning alive of human victims in cages made of wicker. They were a wicked, cruel, unclean hierarchy, my friend, and the noblest thing the Romans did was to destroy them, root and branch. Yes.

"Remember how Monsieur Bartrow, while in his fit of madness, swore by the gem of serpents' spew? That is surely confirmation, for on his brow the Arch-

druid was wont to wear a glowing jewel—probably an opal—supposed to be made from crystallized spittle of serpents. Together with the oak, the mistletoe and the yew-bough, it was regarded as a thing of peculiar holiness by them.

"*Très bon.* We have now placed Monsieur Bartrow on the stage of olden days. What of Madame Sylvia? It seems her acting of the scene of sacrifice should tell the tale.

"Undoubtedly she was a sort of priestess of the Druids, a kind of Vestal, vowed forever to virginity, and liable to horrid death if she committed any breach of discipline. But she was, as she did say, 'formed for love,' and she did listen to the dictates of her woman's heart, only to be discovered by a Druid priest and led away to the great sacrificial oak to suffer death.

"And yet she must have lived—did not Monsieur Bartrow refer to her finding shelter with the Romans? Too, she must have had offspring, and to them given the curse of memory of the Druid's shadow which lay across her path, and of that progeny, poor Madame Sylvia was one. Yes.

"And Monsieur Bartrow—in him there lived the memory of *his* ancestor, and of his thwarted vengeance. He was peculiarly sensitive to the influence of the old ones, as is evidenced by his love of oak and his collection of Druid relics. These relics, too, although he knew it not, were constant stimulants of his unrealized thirst for vengeance. When he and Madame Sylvia did confront each other—*eh bien*, we know the rest. He was the Druid priest once more and she the victim who escaped from sacrifice. *Parbleu*, he almost balanced the account to-night, I think!"

"But see here," I asked, "isn't there still danger that he'll revert to that

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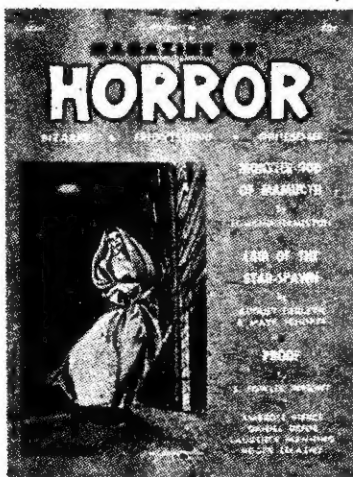
strange condition again? Is it safe for her to live near him?"

"I think so," he returned. "Remember, my friend, mental sores are much like those of the body. Left to themselves they mortify and fester, but if we open them—*pouf!*—they vanish. So with this strange pair. Tonight we probed beneath the surface of their conscious minds, deep into those age-old memories which plagued them, and from him we did extract the lust for vengeance long unsatisfied, and from her the gnawing fear of retribution. Also, for added safety, we have destroyed the relics of the Druids which he kept in his house and which daily gave new energy to his desire to accomplish that deed of murder in which his ancestor of ancient times did fail. No, my friend, the ghosts of the old priest who was raised this night, and of her whom he would have made his victim, have been laid forever in quiet graves of forgetfulness, and the shadow of the Druid no more will fall across the paths of Monsieur Barrow and Madame Sylvia. It is very well."

"But suppose——"

"*Ah bab*, suppose you cease to guard that brandy bottle as a miser guards his gold," he interrupted with a smile. "My throat is desert-dry from too much explanation, and I am weary with this tiresome business of pursuing long-dead Druids and their unfaithful priestesses. Give me to drink and let me go to bed."

See the inside cover, opposite the first page of this issue, for an important announcement which will prove of interest to you.



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